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ABSTRACT

This report was submitted by Keene State College in response to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' request for an update on Keene State College's progress in a number of areas. The college reports that it is pursuing both large-scale and focused planning activities using information that assesses institutional effectiveness. Assessment of learning outcomes is occurring or being planned in curricular and co-curricular areas. The college has increased the number of tenure-track faculty and developed processes that ensure that new faculty members are placed in disciplines with enrollment and programmatic needs. The school is also providing all academic disciplines with a consistent set of reports on programs and faculty workload on an annual basis. It has re-instituted its academic program review cycle, where the Senate Academic Overview Committee reviews all programs on a 7 year basis. A top priority at Keene State College is managing course offerings for students. As part of the school efforts, the academic deans are more closely involved in reviewing course demands, staffing configurations, and enrollment needs. Despite these efforts, there are still complaints from students that they cannot get the courses they want. However, the senior survey, administered to graduating seniors, does not indicate that students perceive course availability to be an impediment. The college plans to become more evidence-driven in its assessment of course availability in order to understand fully student needs and expectations. In addition to monitoring course availability, the school continues to pursue diversity goals. It has made modest gains in recruiting minority students and addressing campus climate and awareness yet has made significant gains in recruiting women faculty to the campus. (AA)

Keene State College
Keene, New Hampshire

Report to
New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.
January 1998

Summary of Report

Keene State College submits this narrative in response to the New England Association of Schools & College's request for a report on the college's progress in:

1. implementing its planning and assessment activities;
2. increasing the proportion of full-time over part-time faculty;
3. assuring the availability of required courses; and
4. achieving its diversity goals.

The College reports that it is pursuing both large-scale and focused planning activities using information that assesses institutional effectiveness. Assessment of learning outcomes is occurring or being planned in curricular and co-curricular areas. The College has increased the number of tenure-track faculty and developed processes that ensure that new faculty members are placed in disciplines with enrollment and programmatic needs. The College is managing course offerings for students; senior surveys do not indicate that students perceive course availability to be an impediment. Finally, the College continues to pursue diversity goals. It has made modest gains in recruiting minority students and in addressing campus awareness and climate and significant gains in recruiting women faculty.

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Institutional Overview

Keene State College is a public comprehensive college with a focus on undergraduate education and selected graduate programs within the field of teacher education. The College's primary mission is an interrelated one of offering the liberal arts and teacher education programs to its undergraduates. In addition, the College offers a limited range of technical and professional programs to serve the needs of the state and the region. The College stresses access to quality higher education for a broad range of students. In the fall 1997 semester, the College enrolled 4,567 students. About one-quarter of the College's students attend part-time. Sixty percent of the students enrolled are from New Hampshire.

In the period since the fifth year report in 1995, the College has experienced relative stability in leadership, staffing and enrollment, following several difficult years that included: (1) a protracted faculty contract negotiation; (2) a Trustee mandated staff reduction; and (3) a period of turnover in the top administration. In June 1996, the University System Board of Trustees and faculty union settled a three-year contract. That, coupled with stable administrative leadership, has resulted in the reestablishment of governance and planning processes that had been interrupted by a period of faculty work-to-rule.

Standard Two - Planning and Evaluation

What is Keene State College's progress in implementing its planning process and assessing institutional effectiveness, with particular emphasis on the assessment of learning outcomes in the academic programs?

Since Keene State College prepared its fifth-year report for NEASC in December 1995, it has initiated a broad-based planning process designed to identify priorities for which there is substantial campus-wide agreement. Using techniques of large-scale system change, the campus has undertaken two planning conferences: an open-space conference in the spring of 1996, followed by a more focused future search conference in January 1997. These events were designed to facilitate a high level of participation in planning activities and broad consensus about campus priorities. Large-scale system change techniques allow the campus to understand areas where there was substantial agreement about the need for change. A strategic plan and assessment measures are now being crafted around twelve broad themes. The intent of this planning is not to create a rigid three- to five-year plan but a broad-based, dynamic plan that guides future direction while maintaining institutional flexibility.

At the same time, the College has pursued more focused planning in the areas of technology, academic programs and General Education, student services, budget, facilities, and enrollment. Each of these efforts involves the collection and analysis of data and the continuous evaluation of campus progress toward achieving its purposes and objectives. For example, a team of faculty and staff are working collaboratively on issues related to enrollment and retention toward the goal of improving the College's retention of first-year students. Enrollment planning is also coordinated with the University System, which is working at the system-level to plan for increased demand for enrollment by in-state students in the next decade. The College has contracted with the Noel-Levitz firm for enrollment planning assistance.

Technology planning resulted in the adoption of a five-year technology plan in the spring of 1996. As a result of this plan, the College has reorganized campus technology services to improve end-user support, undertaken the implementation of a relational student information system, and adopted a sustainable plan for upgrading and replacing campus networks and workstations. Like enrollment planning, the technology plan is tied into a University System technology plan, which includes much needed improvements to the financial and human-resource information system.

Since 1995, new technology and software have allowed for the creation of more detailed and integrated student tracking and faculty workload databases. This, in turn, has resulted in more detailed research on students and analysis of faculty workload. The College is now providing all academic disciplines with a consistent set of reports on programs and faculty workload on an annual basis. These reports are used in program review and faculty evaluations as well as to project the number of faculty needed to implement a potential new general education program. In the last four years, Academic Affairs has introduced discipline-staffing plans. Discipline coordinators create three-year projections of staffing needs, which are analyzed by the deans and the Vice President for Academic Affairs to determine the placement of future tenure track faculty positions. This process is leading to a realignment of tenure track positions to meet institutional objectives and shifting enrollment patterns.

The College has also re-instituted its academic program review cycle, where the Senate Academic Overview Committee reviews all programs on a seven-year cycle. This program review process is in its third year.

Information from the student databases has also allowed for detailed retention analysis using segmentation techniques to isolate student subgroups with the highest attrition rates. This analysis is allowing the College to identify the

primary characteristics related to student retention. Since most students who leave Keene State before graduating do so before declaring an academic major, this assessment has the potential for improving the learning outcomes for identified at-risk students.

Other efforts to assess learning outcomes are program-specific rather than College-wide. The most significant work in assessing learning outcomes is occurring within the College's undergraduate Teacher Education Program, which has undergone a substantial revision based on identified learning outcomes. Having identified these outcomes, the Teacher Education faculty has created and implemented a new curriculum and is beginning to assess student learning outcomes from this new curriculum. The revised undergraduate education program was recently re-accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

The expectation that assessment be part of all curricular and co-curricular planning and implementation cycles is growing on campus. The College is in the process of assessing its current general education program and developing a new general education proposal, which we anticipate will be submitted to the College Senate in the Spring. The new proposal identifies learning outcomes and assessment opportunities. In addition, there is interest in assessment among the faculty. A group of interested faculty members, along with the Vice President and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, have begun to examine issues related to assessment of student learning at Keene State.

In summary, the College is pursuing informed decision-making under the umbrella of broad planning themes.

Standard 5 - Faculty

What progress has KSC made in increasing the proportion of full-time over part-time faculty?

FACULTY HEADCOUNT*

Fall
(1990, 1994, 1997)

Faculty Rank	1990	1994	1997
Professor	57	64	69
Associate Professor	47	47	54
Assistant Professor	55	53	43
Instructor	11	8	9
Faculty-in-Residence	10	2	7
Resident Artist	1	2	1
Faculty Fellow	0	2	1
Total Full-time Faculty	181	178	184
Adjunct	138	165	169
Total Faculty	319	343	353

Part-time faculty members continue to fill an essential role at Keene State College, providing specialized knowledge and teaching courses required by our students. The College continues to function under a USNH trustee-imposed cap on the number of permanent positions. However, it has undertaken strategies directed at increasing the number of tenure-track positions, filling full-time faculty vacancies, and assigning full-time faculty positions to disciplines with critical needs, as well as improving the quality of adjunct faculty work life.

In addition to the proportion of full-time over part-time faculty, it is important to consider the number of tenure-track positions. The College currently has 168 tenure track positions either filled or for which searches are occurring, an increase of four tenure track positions since earlier in the 90s. There was a

* These numbers include librarians and tenured teachers at the College's laboratory elementary school.

concerted effort in the 1995-96 academic year to fill tenure track positions that had remained unfilled during a period of faculty union work-to-rule and Trustee-mandated reallocation. The College has adopted a process of careful review whenever a tenure-track position is vacant. Described in the previous section (planning), this process allows the College to make decisions to place faculty in disciplines with programmatic or enrollment needs. The College has also hired some faculty with joint appointments and recruited new faculty with experience in interdisciplinary programs. Thus, new faculty lines have been assigned to disciplines with high enrollments, including graphic design, safety, biology, and environmental studies; faculty lines have been lost in political science; and shared positions have been established in economics and women's studies, as well as physics and science education.

As part of this increase in tenure-track positions, the College converted three part-time positions into tenure track positions effective fall 1998. Whenever a tenure track faculty member retires, he or she is being replaced with a tenure track faculty member unless there is a tenable proposal from a department to use this position in another way. We have had two instances, one in the Library and one in Theatre, Film and Dance, where tenure track faculty retired and the department requested that the position be filled by someone holding a full-time professional staff position. In spite of these exceptions, there has been an increase in the number of tenure track faculty, and the College remains committed to increasing the number of tenure track faculty as its budget and trustee policy allow.

The College recognizes that it will continue to employ adjunct faculty and that adjunct faculty perform important roles. For the 1997-98 academic year, the College raised the per credit hour pay scale for adjunct faculty by approximately 25 percent. The College also published a handbook for adjunct faculty to make them more aware of policies and procedures at the College. The College is

examining other adjustments in working conditions for adjunct faculty, including additional pay increases and assigning and compensating adjunct faculty for non-instructional duties.

Standard 4 - Programs and Instruction

What progress has Keene State College made in assuring the availability of required courses for its students?

Managing the availability of courses continues to be a top priority of Keene State College. As part of our efforts, the academic deans are more closely involved in reviewing course demands, staffing configurations and enrollment needs. The three-year staffing plan described earlier places a great deal of emphasis on matching the College's permanent staffing with its enrollment. In addition, the College has instituted gates or enrollment caps in certain programs such as psychology, film and sports medicine to ensure that students who major in those programs are able to obtain the courses they need. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is working proactively with the Registrar's Office and the deans in course scheduling and adjustment and is undertaking an evaluation of our add/drop process to ensure that it effectively meets students' needs.

Despite these efforts, there are still complaints from students that they cannot get the courses they want. The senior survey, administered to students who persist to graduation, does not indicate that students perceive course availability to be a problem or impediment.

Keene State College has some data that captures the number of student attempts to registrar after a section is closed; however, the meaning of this information is unclear for the following reasons:

- ◆ The data does not distinguish between students seeking a particular course section (instructor, time slot) and students closed out of courses that they need.
- ◆ In general, students do not attempt to register for a section after it is posted as closed, and the on-line registration system that has been

used for the last several years provides students with information about section closings before they register.

- ◆ Seats and courses are added throughout the registration process.
- ◆ Schedule adjustments are made into the first-week of the semester.

Thus students who do not have the classes they seek after the initial registration may have satisfactory schedules at the beginning of the semester. Keene State College still has progress to make anticipating course demands so that students may *pre-register* successfully. The College intends to become more evidence-driven in its assessment of course availability in order to understand fully student needs and expectations. A new student information system will allow us to move away from a decentralized approach that tends to rely on historical precedent, to a more quantitative analysis of current needs. The College is in the process of implementing this new student information system which will allow it to review more timely data on course enrollment and student needs. The degree audit module of this system will allow the College to more accurately project future demands in required courses.

Standard 6 - Student Services

What progress has Keene State College made in achieving its own goals regarding diversity with respect to student enrollment, hiring of faculty, and general campus climate?

In Keene State College's large-scale planning efforts, diversity has consistently emerged as a campus goal -- diversity as an understanding as well as a demographic goal. The campus continues to make modest progress with regard to its enrollment and employment goals as well as in those areas that enhance student understanding of diversity issues, faculty preparedness to incorporate diversity issues into the curriculum, and campus climate.

Student Enrollment

Keene State College is pleased to see an increase in the number of minority students enrolled in this year's entering class. This increase reflects a shift in our recruitment strategy. While we continue to identify and attend college programs in urban areas such as Hartford, New Haven, Boston, New York, and New Jersey, we have focused more intensely in New Hampshire. There is a growing Hispanic population in the south-central part of the state, and we have established a relationship with the Director of the Alliance of the Progress of Hispanic Americans (ALPHA) Program. KSC participates in ALPHA college fairs and social events and advertises in ALPHA publications regularly. Students who disclose their ethnic background on the admissions application are tracked through the admissions process so that admissions staff can follow-up with students on an individual basis. This follow-up has been particularly effective, because minority candidates had not been completing their applications at the same rate as students in the white non-Hispanic category.

Keene State College
Minority Entering Student Recruitment Goals and Enrollment Results
1994 - 1997

Year	Goal	Enrolled
Fall 1994	20	22
Fall 1995	23	20
Fall 1996	27	18
Fall 1997	37	31

Keene State College's total minority enrollment has increased from 1.9 percent (n=91) to 2.2% (n=102) in this same period.

Keene State College Minority Enrollments, 1994 - 1997

	Fall 1994	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997
American Indian	19	17	17	16
African American	17	16	18	23
Asian American	23	22	18	20
Hispanic American	32	45	37	43
Total Minority	91 (1.9%)	100(2.0%)	90(1.9%)	102(2.2%)
White, non-Hispanic	4396	4575	4445	4224
Non-resident Alien	26	25	44	37
Total Respondents	4535	4719	4597	4379
Refused/Blank	325	239	190	188
TOTAL ALL STUDENTS	4860	4958	4787	4567

While these gains are modest, they represent the College's sustained commitment to achieving its diversity goals.

Faculty and Staff Recruitment

Keene State has an Affirmative Action Plan and it has continued to be successful in recruiting women, particularly for tenure track faculty positions. In fall 1995,

women held 35 percent of tenure track positions; in fall 1997, the percentage of women in tenure track positions had increased to 44 percent. Three tenure track faculty members are ethnic minorities, down from 4 in 1995; 6 staff are ethnic minorities, up from 4 in 1995.

There are currently 18 faculty searches in process, and the College is aggressively seeking minority candidates. The College is soliciting applications from individuals listed in the Minority & Women Doctoral Directory, Volumes I and II and the New England Directory of African-American, Hispanic, Native American and Asian American Doctoral Students. In addition, the Department of Human Resources conducts search committee orientations which include a review of affirmative action plan provisions and a videotape entitled "Shattering the Silences," which deals with eliminating discrimination in hiring.

Curriculum and Campus Climate

Understanding of diversity is a goal that is embedded in the revised general education proposal under development. Members of the faculty - the core of whom participated in the successful NEH faculty development seminar, *The Social Construction of Race*, that was held at Keene State College in 1995 - continue to be actively engaged in self-study of diversity topics through a continuing multicultural seminar luncheon series.

Beginning this academic year, the College Senate has adopted a campus wide diversity theme, *American Neighbors: Canada, Mexico, USA*. This theme is used to focus a wide range of curricular and co-curricular activities, and thus to increase their visibility and meaning to our students. Academic activities have included guest lecturers, an art exhibit and musical performance, faculty presentations, and special course offerings. Student activities include trips to Mexico and Canada, films and festivals. At the same time, the College has become a member of the National Student Exchange in order to provide

domestic exchange programs for our students, faculty, and staff in addition to the international exchange opportunities which are currently available. KSC students will begin to participate in domestic exchange programs in fall 1998. Currently, approximately 135 KSC students participate in international exchange programs and 108 international students attend KSC each year.

The College Diversity Council is in the process of planning an assessment of Keene State College's diversity efforts. The Council is a group of representatives of campus organizations that meets to share insights and information on the college's efforts to promote respect for and understanding of individual differences. The assessment will report to the Diversity Council on the strengths and weaknesses of the College's efforts in this area. The assessment will include interviews with all offices or organizations with some responsibility in this area, including the Office of National and International Exchange Programs, the Office of Multicultural programs, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice President for Student Affairs, Women's Studies, President's Commission on the Status of Women, KSC Pride, TRIO programs, the Newman Center, Campus Ministry, and Hillel.